

Town of Camden

Seeks Individuals to Participate in Review of Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Camden is seeking individuals who would like to participate in the review of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Lowrie Sargent, chair of the Camden Comprehensive Planning Committee, explained that the Town does a review of the comprehensive plan every ten years. We often need a comprehensive plan when applying for grants and a comprehensive plan acts as a road map and guide for future town planning. Our last comprehensive plan was approved by Camden voters in 2005. We are aiming to have this review done and approved by voters by 2015.

As a participant in the review of the comprehensive plan individuals can attend meetings of the groups or committees that are assigned to review specific chapters. You will be notified when and where these meetings will be held," explained Sargent. Each group or individual reviewing a chapter should come up with any changes, additions, deletions and updates and submit them to the comprehensive planning committee. Then we will have a public meeting with representatives from each of the groups and individuals reviewing the chapters. At this meeting the public will be invited to comment.

People interested in participating in the review of any chapter of the Town's Comprehensive Plan should contact Jean Freedman-White, Comprehensive Plan Coordinator at 236-4885. For more information about the comprehensive plan please check the town's website at www.camdenmaine.gov.

"Rather than having one comprehensive planning committee review all the chapters, we are asking town committees, local organizations and citizens to review chapters related to their areas of operations, interests or expertise," Sargent explained.

Among the topics to be reviewed in the plan are: town history, population, the economy, downtown, natural resources, sewer and water utilities, solid waste, transportation, lane use patterns, housing, the harbor, recreation and open space, historic resources, public facilities, fiscal capacity, future land use plan, land use regulations, planning, capital improvements, regional cooperation, and other vehicles for implementation.

"We are currently reviewing the following chapters," explained Jean Freedman-White.

Chapter 1 relates to the history of Camden from the 1790's to the present.

Chapter 5 covers Natural Resources in Camden such as soil composition, topography and watersheds as well as potential problems that might impact them. Updates need to be made in the areas of land use patterns will be considered.

Chapter 6, Natural Opportunities and Constraints, evaluates naturally occurring development constraints such as steep slopes, wetlands and wildlife habitats. Based on these constraints areas of the town are then classified based on constraints or unconstrained so they may be developed.

Chapter 8, solid waste, considers the history of the operation and plans through 1999 of the Midcoast Solid Waste Facility which handles trash, garbage, construction debris and recycling for four area towns. One of the chief concerns is the capacity for debris which translates into the expected life of the facility. To be reviewed are the capacity consumption rate, the irregularity of the recycling secondary market and changing environmental laws and standards. The results of these studies will be shared with the other partner municipalities so that a coordinated effort is made to continue this vital service to Camden. Working groups should suggest alternatives to the current facility and the costs related to these alternatives should it be found that the facility will run out of capacity by 2025.

The Harbor, the subject of chapter 12, encompasses an inner and outer harbor, thousands of feet of shoreline, public and private facilities and Curtis Island. Issues to be considered are timely dredging, balancing the interests of commercial activities such as windjammers and fishermen with the interests of recreational boaters. To be considered: regulatory changes, weather changes, best use of public landing, enhancement of facilities for visiting boaters, enhancement of Curtis island facilities, importance of the land view from the harbor, the possibility of a marine history museum, upgrading facilities for commercial fisherman, and consideration of suggestions from the Downtown Master Plan.

The review of the historic resources, Chapter 14, will look at Camden's historic buildings, the importance of preserving them and preserving the downtown historic commercial buildings. The only standards in the existing ordinance regarding historic districts are advisory and non-binding. Consideration will be given to adopting a historic preservation ordinance, which would make the town eligible for certain grants and would give the town control over state and federal projects in the historic district.

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